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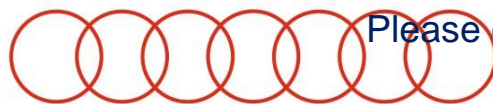
**H.E. ERASTUS MWENCHA
DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION**

AT THE

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

ABUJA, NIGERIA

14 JULY 2013



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PROTOCOLS

It is a privilege for me to address the Executive Council at this Special Summit of the African Union on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. I wish to express my gratitude to the Government and People of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the initiative of hosting this important Summit and for the hospitality extended to all participants. I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my personal appreciation to H.E President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan for his continued commitment to the fight against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Indeed this beautiful city of Abuja will occupy an important place when the history of the fight against these three diseases is narrated.

Since 2000, Africa has kept the fight against these diseases high on its national, continental and international agendas. Three special summits were convened and commitments adopted in Abuja, Nigeria on HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria with AWA driving the African leadership. These were subsequently turned into actions at national level, with the commendable support of the international community. The diseases had been declared as a state of emergency and a threat to security in Africa – sad to note that these concerns are still very pertinent today.

We have come a long way in the fight against HIV, TB and Malaria. It is a war that we have fought very well and achieved significant successes. Nearly every country in Africa has success stories to tell of lives saved through preventing new HIV infections including a drastic reduction in mother to child transmissions, and preventing AIDS-related deaths, as well as morbidity from Tuberculosis and Malaria. More than 5 million Africans are receiving antiretroviral treatment – up from only 50 000 a decade ago. HIV infections associated with TB is a major problem with nearly half of the TB patients being HIV positive. About 60% of TB estimated are detected, notified and treated. Malaria mortality in Africa has fallen on the average by more than 33% and in some countries by about 50% since 2000. Indeed we are moving towards achieving universal access to HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria services as envisaged in the Abuja Call 2006, and I am happy to note that some of our Member States may achieve universal access by 2015.

However, we still have many battles to fight. Like any other war situation, success should not be followed by complacency. Africa should be more vigilant and improve on its performance, reduce chances of new infections and ensure universal access to HIV, TB and Malaria services. Health is a fundamental right to which every citizen is entitled. As leaders, we have an obligation to make this a reality. The AIDS, TB and Malaria response is a long-term investment, as millions of Africans will need access to prevention and treatment Programmes for their entire lives. We need to provide national innovative solutions to financing and drug production, as we cannot continue to rely heavily on external funding for health in Africa. We must constantly bear in mind that investment in Health is an investment in economic development.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen

As we look towards post 2015 development agenda, we need to resolve to take action towards the elimination of these three diseases. We have the resources, we can access the technology and the know-how to end this scourge. At this Summit, it will be critical for us to set very clear targets, as well as how to achieve these targets towards the elimination of HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria.

I wish to thank all the Member States that have come and preparations made towards achieving this agenda in preparation for the Assembly on Monday.

I thank you and wish you successful deliberations.

